



DEPARTMENT OF  
GENERAL SERVICES

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## News Release

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# DGS scientist wins national award for her work cutting turnaround time for TB test results from weeks to days

**RICHMOND, Va.** \_ The Department of General Services today announced that the National Tuberculosis Controllers Association (NTCA) named Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS) scientist Kathleen Milloy its 2023 Ed Desmond TB Laboratorian Award winner for her work to improve dramatically the turnaround time for TB test results at Virginia's public health and environmental laboratory.

The award, handed out recently at the Association of Public Health Laboratory's (APHL) National Conference on Laboratory Aspects of Tuberculosis in Atlanta, honors exemplary service, dedication and leadership to a TB laboratory professional.

"It is an honor to be recognized by NTCA, APHL, and my peers in the laboratory field," said **Milloy, a Principal Scientist in the DCLS Microbial Reference Group**. "Tuberculosis still affects thousands of people in the U.S., so timely diagnosis and treatment are critical. The TB laboratory team at DCLS and our Virginia Department of Health program partners work diligently every day to help prevent and move toward elimination of this disease in the Commonwealth."



In her role as Principal Scientist, Milloy provides technical guidance, expertise and leadership to the TB laboratory. Milloy was instrumental in the successful validation and implementation of new testing that cut the time to determine actionable TB results from approximately six weeks down to two days. This advancement was possible through the implementation of real-time polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, testing for the detection of TB in respiratory specimens. This replaced time-consuming testing of TB cultures, which took weeks to grow in the laboratory.

Validation of this type of testing was an extensive undertaking and required significant optimization and troubleshooting to ensure appropriate use of this laboratory developed test. Along with her team, Milloy worked to ensure a smooth transition, coordinating the challenging updates and training laboratory staff and partners at the Virginia Department of Health on the new testing.

"We are so proud of Kathleen for this well-deserved recognition," said **DGS Director Joe Damico**. "Kathleen's dedication to public health and the detection of TB shows in the amazing work she and her team do at the lab and their commitment to making it a best-in-class state laboratory."

**Dr. Denise Toney, DCLS Director**, added: "Kathleen has made significant contributions to the

advancement of public health TB testing at DCLS and has been critical to the success of the TB laboratory. Kathleen’s work, and the work of her team, has made it possible to detect and treat individuals to improve not only their health outcomes, but to prevent spread of this life-threatening disease in the community.”

Milloy has a Master of Science degree in Clinical Laboratory Sciences and is a certified Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) by the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Board of Certification. She has served in her role for seven years.

TB is an infectious disease caused by a bacterium that most often affects the lungs. Find out [more about TB](#) from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The DCLS TB lab performs testing on approximately 2,500 clinical specimens and identifies approximately 100 cases of TB annually. In 2022, Virginia experienced 195 cases, with a rate of 2.3 per 100,000 residents.

**About DGS:** DGS provides laboratory, procurement, real estate, and engineering and architectural services for state agencies, as well as fleet vehicle management, graphic design, surplus property disposal, and mail services at the seat of government. The agency also manages the facilities and grounds at Capitol Square. For more information, visit [dgs.virginia.gov](https://dgs.virginia.gov).

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